

Donn Christy
975 J st.
Baker City, OR 97814
(541)519-8094 cell

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Dear sir:

The intention of this letter is to address the looming Cap and Trade bill. I am a 5th generation Bakerite. Our family came across on the wagon train and settled this valley. We were farmers, loggers and miners. I grew up on a farm in rock creek area. I helped farm, raising hay, milking cows by hand, took care of cattle, gardened and sold strawberries in the summer, and basically lived a simple, stable, honorable life with my brothers and sisters. My late father also worked full time for the federal government in the Soil Conservation Service, until his retirement in the late 80's. He enjoyed his job, working with farmers and ranchers in the area improving land, preserving wildlife habitat, and controlling erosion. Unfortunately, the farm was sold when my parents retired, and we moved back into a smallish house in our hometown of Baker City. During this time, my younger brother and I, both left home and attended college. He, and my older brother now reside in Albany, and my sister and I still live in Baker City, and take care of our aging mother. My sister is an administrator at the high school, and I own a towing company. I am happily married to my high school sweetheart of 30 years and we have two children, one of which my son, who is 22 and works for our family business.

Our family owned business, Superior Towing, was started in 1997, when I was 29, out of our home and driveway, and currently employ 5 full time, and 3 part time employees. We have built a business through sheer determination and will to succeed. This business, like a lot of others, is stressful. It requires unwavering dedication through long nights, sometimes horrible working conditions, and helping those who aren't able to help themselves, and/or sometimes not in the best of circumstances. We are repeatedly utilized by authorities, as the enforcement arm of the law, and witness people at their worst. But overall, we have found our profession to be rewarding, and choose to concentrate on our positive attributes of inherent helpfulness found in most tow companies. We have been awarded twice, our county's highest award of "business of the year", as well as national recognition as one of the industry's "top ten" towing providers in North America. We donate annually to community causes, little league teams, and events. Throughout our 23 years in business, we have seen changes, with the cost of doing business, very high on the list. Fuel spiked in the early 2000's, and never really rebounded. Property tax, business tax, insurance costs, payroll, all have nearly doubled. Our insurance is more than 5 times what it was in 1997. Throughout all this, we have strived to keep rates low, continue to pay family wages, and stay solvent. However, if faced with the prospect of starting over, it certainly couldn't be done. I feel that if we were to quit, or worse, be put out of business, there would be no one to replace us, as it simply cannot be done in today's economic climate. Let me say, that it isn't one single thing, but a slow death by "a thousand cuts". The same remains true for my hometown Baker City.

After (my brief) college career, I married my wife in 1989. We bought a house, and we both had small stints of employment at different businesses. Eventually, in 1990, I started working at Les Schwab Tires, and my wife found her nitch at a local trucking company, where she still works today as a bookkeeper after 30 years. I enjoyed working at Schwabs, and learned a great deal, as is with any employee who works there, about not only customer service, but actually "knowing" your customer. I

personally, cannot think of a better learning environment for young people. I was working there when the Spotted Owl debate was in full swing.

The history of Baker City is a colorful one. Once called the “crown jewel” of Eastern Oregon, Baker City was bustling engine of economic prosperity. At one time, and as recent as the 1950’s, Baker had 4 saw mills, 2 laundry and uniform companies, a dozen furniture stores, 6 car dealerships, its own radio station and newspaper, and a drive in theater. Families with Family wages flourished. This was the case throughout the 60’s and 70’s. Our school enrollment stayed nearly the same through the 80’s when I graduated, of around 200 students per class. Then came the Spotted Owl. Whichever side of the controversy you land on, there are simple undeniable truths, and from my perspective, this is the result, as I am, and my family are “natives” to the area. In the early 90’s, like I said, I was working for Les Schwab. I changed ALOT of tires, and although we had only 1 mill left by then, there was still plenty to do. On average, half of any day was spent servicing the mill with tires. The other was spent servicing privately owned log trucks with tires that supplied the mill. People in Baker either worked at the mill, had family who worked at the mill, or had retired from the mill. Both my grandfathers, and a couple uncles worked at the mill. There was an “owner/operator” log truck parked on every street corner in town, and young men my age worked for log truck companies. These were all very good, family wage jobs. These people were the economic engine that bought houses, furniture, and cars. They paid taxes, put their kids in school, ate out on Friday nights. That’s what people do who are building their lives.

I remember, the very moment when I realized the mill would be closing due to the winds of radical, political change. As I stood in the tire shop changing the last forklift tire for the mill, I asked my boss, “What do you think this will do to our business?” He replied, as the optimist he was, “We’ll be OK. I don’t think anyone will lose their job here. We’ll just work harder.” Being in my 20’s, and naive, that was good enough for me, and put my mind at ease. He was right. We worked harder for business, and our tire store thrived....Or so I was told. Just like the “frog in a pot of water”, or what has recently been quoted as “a dish best served cold and slow”, so does the hands of time, and if you blink, you may miss it. My wife and I had good, secure jobs, and we were busy remodeling our house. I’m not real sure when I woke up and noticed the change in our town. What once was a busy downtown, now had empty storefronts. The drive in was boarded up. We didn’t have good ‘ol KBKR to listen to. Car dealerships were gone and replaced with empty lots with weeds growing through the cracks in the worn pavement. Grocery stores, Newspaper’s, cafe’s, all gone or going. Businesses, some multi-generational, all gone. What happened? Our economic engine left. Displaced timber and mill workers left our town, seeking family wages. They took their children, and left our “crown jewel”, and who could blame them? In 1998, just after starting our tow company, we rented U-Hauls as a side business. There was always a shortage of trucks and moving equipment in Baker City, due to the mass migration of thousands of “economic engines” moving to other ares for work. Any given week, we would drive to Boise Idaho, where everyone was moving to, to get trucks and drive them back to Baker for reservations we did not have equipment for, so that families could move out. That was the case for several years until we called it quits with U-Haul in 2004. Now, today, there are more empty storefronts than occupied. Entire needed services are gone, and although our city’s population remains the same, Baker’s demographics have changed. We are now an aged population, where retirees live, as we are a quiet, and a very liveable place with low crime....for now. Our schools currently have less than half the enrollment they had just 30 years ago, but our hospital has doubled in size. Government services such as DHS has exploded. To be honest, all government agencies have grown in size, and it appears, less to do, but that is another subject. Our workforce has dwindled, and “employable” workers are non-existent. Not that there are people here who could work, but most won’t, as government assistance seems to be the largest employer. Drugs like heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamine are

rampant with 20 and 30 year old zombie-like men and women, visibly “lurching”, mid-day down main streets. That reflects in our towing business, as 70% of all city impounded vehicles, are impounded due to drug activity, wherein we receive no compensation for our services, and the vehicles are sent to a local recycler for disposal. Baker County, however is home to Marvin Windows, Behlen Manufacturing, and Ashgove cement, who supply the bulk of non-government, family wage jobs. They are also the largest of Baker County’s tax base, Ashgove being the largest. Baker City and County has also received state and federal grants to build industrial park(s) with infrastructure necessary for additional, needed manufacturing for the future of our town. To date, there has been zero interest from any manufacturer to locate here. There just isn’t the required, employable workforce necessary to fill the positions. Like I stated before, our economic engine has left, never to return, until possibly retirement later in life. Additionally, with our current Oregon leadership, and the anti-business climate, there is little chance, in the short term, we will ever see manufacturing expansion here locally.

Our business, Superior Towing has grown, regardless of the tough economic conditions here locally, as the bulk of our towing, relies on the interstate. Most of our foundation occurred in the early 2000’s, where we ran our company with conservative ideals. We kept our debt low, and worked hard to achieve economic stability. Our vision and goal was positive, and we always felt our future WAS ONE OF WHAT YOU MAKE IT. But it has been becoming increasingly clear that a business depends on more than just will to succeed. There need to be opportunity of achievement. Not hand-outs, safety nets, or business welfare such as government subsidies. But an environment where one can succeed with hard work. Businesses should never be labeled as not ever paying their fair share, or be labeled evil or bad. Not all businesses are owned by fat, white men in top hats. Most are just honest, good people who want to build something of value. Not be told “they didn’t build that”. Since Brown has come into office, there has been a seemingly, intentional war on all business in Oregon. The latest barrage of legislation is just another setback to hurdle, and comes through “emergency clause”, without the voter’s consent. In fact, the new CAT tax (sales tax) was voted down in 2016 by Oregon voters, just to be re-named CAT tax, and pushed through by executive action. It is disheartening and helpless to see legislation, used as a weapon against businesses to completely burn down this wonderful state, and my hometown. We have seen, through the years, one by one, and ever so slowly, laws and regulations, disguised as moral urgency, destroy rural Oregon, along with Baker City, with little regard for the consequences. Just like the frog in the pot, and with the same swoop of the pen, entire economies are decimated, and people suffer. One not need look any farther than California, where the cost of living is exorbitant, and the mass exodus of it’s citizens and businesses continues. It is a sanctuary vacuum where the tax base is being replaced with dependents and not producers. Oregon is adopting the same failed policies of its southern neighbor, but there will come a time when smarter, cooler heads will have to come to power, to reverse this suicidal course. But it will be too late. Just like Baker City, Oregon’s economic engine will have left, and just like California, never to return. The latest of liberal agenda is Cap and Trade. This will spell the end for Baker City’s remaining, family wage, manufacturing jobs. It will also be the end of our family run and operated Superior Towing. Not only will fuel increase, but the re-tooling of newer equipment will never be able to be afforded. New large tow trucks are as much as tax-payer funded fire trucks. Most are \$500,000 to replace, and require more than one per job. It will take nearly 2 million of new debt for our company to remain in business. It is simply not achievable in today’s economic climate, with God only knows, what new ant-business regulation by emergency clause is right around the corner. Our largest employer and taxpayer, Ashgrove, will leave after calling Baker County its home after decades. And why shouldn’t they? The added CAT tax on it’s own is simply too much. What will be left of Baker City without these needed industry’s I can only speculate. But given California as a model, our local history of losing our mill due to the spotted owl, our growing drug problem, and no hire-able workforce, it will most certainly be the end for Baker City, and then Oregon.

For those who believe that our insignificant contribution by killing Oregon's economy and it's citizens livelihoods is worth the price, please reconsider. For those who believe common ground can be achieved with radical zealots, you are mistaken. For those who feel this is as dire as I, and many others do too, stand your ground.

Sincerely,

Donn Christy

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Donn Christy", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.